

Sacramento- Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi today applauded the plan put together by State, County and City officials to begin a community clean-up of fire-ravaged San Diego neighborhoods. On Tuesday, Garamendi brought together state and local experts who coordinated debris removal after the devastating Angora fire in South Lake Tahoe this past June to outline for San Diego officials the successful steps undertaken to speed fire recovery and enable the South Lake Tahoe community to begin rebuilding. The plan announced today by San Diego County and City officials is modeled on that successful plan.

“After a devastating disaster, homeowners face the daunting challenge of cleaning up their properties before they can begin rebuilding their lives,” said Lt. Governor Garamendi. “The community clean-up plan announced today, modeled after the successful community clean-up effort undertaken after the Angora fire, offers homeowners, insurers, and state and local agencies a streamlined approach that saves time, money, and headaches in the critical weeks ahead.”

On Tuesday, Garamendi brought together State and local officials in San Diego to encourage all parties to come together and begin a community effort which would allow homeowners to avoid the time-intensive process of screening contractors, and which would protect homeowners from price-gouging and potential fraud by unscrupulous contractors. This approach has the additional benefits of cost-effectiveness for insurers, and the achievement of environmental quality assurances from state regulators as part of the coordinated process.

Following the South Lake Tahoe fires, State and County officials orchestrated a successful, coordinated clean-up effort which cleared hazardous debris from all burned properties within 40 days, a dramatic improvement from previous disasters where clean-up has taken months. The coordinated effort allowed fire survivors to achieve the first step in the rebuilding process quickly, efficiently and safely.

Lt. Governor Garamendi has extensive experience in wildfire and natural disaster issues, having served as a State Senator representing mountainous areas of Northern California, including the Lake Tahoe area. Garamendi also served as the Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior during the Clinton Administration, and for eight years as California’s elected Insurance Commissioner, where he fought to ensure that homeowner policies give California consumers the disaster protection they deserve. Most recently, Garamendi served as the Acting Governor when the Angora Fire broke out in South Lake Tahoe this past June.

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For Immediate Release

November 2, 2007

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